

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

MEDIA ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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USCCR TO PROBE IMPENDING DIVISION OF OMAHA SCHOOL DISTRICT BY RACE *Commission to investigate issues and implications of Legislative Bill 1024*

What: Briefing of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring and protecting civil rights

When: Friday, September 8, 2006, 9:00 a.m.

Where: Hilton Omaha Hotel, 1001 Cass Street, Omaha, NE, 68102, (402) 998-3400

OMAHA, NE – At a briefing, to be convened in Omaha, Nebraska, a panel of experts will advise the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on the legal and policy issues and implications raised by Nebraska Legislative Bill 1024. The bill, signed by Governor David Heineman on April 13, 2006, includes an amendment by state Senators Ernie Chambers and Ron Raikes which divides the Omaha School District into three racially identifiable segments. One district will be predominantly African American, another will be chiefly Hispanic, with the third being primarily white.

Although some support the amendment as a means of providing local control to minority communities, others oppose it as a modern-day form of governmentally imposed *de jure* racial segregation. A number of prominent organizations dedicated to opposing state-sponsored racial discrimination, including the Center for Equal Opportunity and the Omaha branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, have opposed this law. Also challenging the law are the Urban League of Nebraska and Senator Pat Bourne, the latter labeling it “state-based segregation.”

The speakers are Patrick Bourne, Nebraska State Senator; Walter Brooks, University of Nebraska Medical Center; Ernest Chambers, Nebraska State Senator; Brenda Council, Board of Directors, Urban League of Nebraska; Marian Fey, Artistic Director, The ARTery; Carol Krejci, President, Omaha Education Association; Josephine Potuto, University of Nebraska College of Law; Everett S. Reynolds, former President, Omaha National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and Christopher Todd Rodgers, Douglas County Board of Commissioners.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with monitoring federal civil rights enforcement. Members include Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds, Vice Chairman Abigail Thernstrom, and Commissioners Jennifer C. Braceras, Peter N. Kirsanow, Arlan D. Melendez, Ashley L. Taylor, and Michael Yaki. Kenneth L. Marcus is Staff Director. Commission meetings are open to the media and general public.

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